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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 PRAGUE 000420

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FOR GENERAL OBERING FROM AMBASSADOR GRABER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/15/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MASS](#) [MARR](#) [EZ](#) [RU](#)  
SUBJECT: MISSILE DEFENSE: SCENESETTER FOR MDA DIRECTOR  
OBERING'S VISIT TO PRAGUE

Classified By: Ambassador Richard Graber  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C/NF) General Obering, your visit to the Czech Republic comes at a crucial time during the Czech national debate on participation in missile defense with the United States. The enthusiastic support of Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek's right-of-center ODS party has gotten us this far, but your personal support can assist in many critical ways. The information you present will assist the ODS in both shoring up support within the governing coalition, building bridges to the main opposition party, and reducing the impact of the misinformation campaign carried out by MD critics over the past nine months.

12. (C/NF) The Czech Republic has been conducting a national debate in earnest on missile defense since July 2006, when the first survey team arrived. One result of this is that many within Czech politics have a much more sophisticated level of understanding of the general structure of missile defense than might be expected. You should structure your briefings to provide information that is detailed and tailored specifically to the radar facility for the Czech Republic. Sufficient time for questions will be essential, in order to distance the United States from the paternalistic briefings of Russia. NATO will be on everyone's minds.

13. (C/NF) When all is said and done the most critical single event for the U.S. radar proposal will be the eventual Czech Parliamentary vote on the negotiated agreement. Your schedule for Prague is aimed at making it easier for the Czech Parliament to eventually authorize the establishment of a radar facility. Key themes for each of the major events are outlined below.

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Sunday 22 April  
Television, Radio and Print Interviews  
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14. (C/NF) One hour has been set aside on Sunday for three critical press interviews, which will take place at the Ambassador's residence. Embassy staff will accompany you. First, you will be interviewed by Czech television for a 20-minute news segment, followed by a 20-minute radio interview. We expect the interviews to ask fairly pointed questions about your assessment of Russia's concerns voiced this week in Brussels, why you have approached the Czech Republic on missile defense, U.S. public and congressional support of missile defense, and why this is not a NATO

undertaking. Following the broadcast interviews, you will speak for 20 minutes with reporter Jiri Roskot, an experienced foreign correspondent for Pravo, a center-left-oriented paper. Roskot is a fair and balanced reporter. He has an in-depth knowledge of NATO and is likely to make this a focal point.

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Sunday 22 April  
Dinner with DDM Bartak and CHOD Picek  
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15. (C/NF) Your dinner with Deputy Defense Minister Martin Bartak and CHOD General Vlastimil Picek gives you an opportunity to enlist more enthusiastic support from the CHOD. Czechs don't trust their politicians, and polling has shown that the public places more faith in the opinion of military officers on national security issues. Picek supports the radar initiative, but needs to become more of a public face on the issue if he is to deliver swings in public opinion that could, in turn, make certain politicians less wary of supporting the issue. You may wish to share your own experience as a missile defense advocate as an example of how Picek might engage on the issue. Deputy Minister Bartak is a strong advocate for missile defense and is likely to welcome a greater role for the CHOD.

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Monday 23 April -  
Breakfast with Ivan Dvorak, and members of think tanks  
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16. (C/NF) MOD Strategic and Defense Planning Director Ivan

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Dvorak, who will have greeted you at the airport on Friday, April 20, is an MD supporter with strong link to NATO. He is close to Czech NATO Ambassador Stefan Fule, and knows enough about the NATO to be able to discuss this missile defense program's level of association with NATO in an intelligent manner. His primary goal is not/not an association for this missile defense project with NATO, rather, it is the success of this bilateral project. However, as an informed defense strategist with an eye on the proclamations of Czech politicians on the issue, Dvorak hopes to maximize any possible NATO link, in order to maximize the chance of success for the project in the domestic political arena.

17. (C/NF) For this discussion with members of think tanks, expect Dvorak to be an ally, aware that this meeting may have significant multiplier effects in terms of what is written by Czech opinion-makers on MD.

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Monday 23 April -  
Meeting with Opposition Leader Jiri Paroubek  
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18. (C/NF) Your meeting with former Prime Minister Jiri Paroubek may be the most important of the visit. Paroubek is a political pit bull, dedicated almost exclusively to the advancement of his political career. Paroubek has told me that he personally supports the radar. But he finds himself in a difficult position: he wants to appear statesmanlike and maintain his generally good relations with the USG (of which he is proud and which he knows will be important if/when he becomes prime minister again), but at the same time won't risk alienating the 80% of his party that say they opposed MD. In February, Paroubek told me he would work to ensure his party remains flexible in its approach to missile defense. So far he has kept his word. While publicly against approval of the initiative without a referendum, Paroubek has the power to allow party members to cross the aisles and support MD in the eventual deciding vote. These votes are important, given the inability to predict how the Green Party will vote on MD.

¶9. (C/NF) Paroubek faces significant pressure from some within his party who are dedicated to stopping the radar initiative. You should use this meeting to provide Paroubek with information he can use internally to justify a more positive approach. He is likely to raise the NATO issue. Financial information indicating how much Czech construction companies could stand to gain, as well as an estimate of the number of local hires could be helpful in appealing to the concerns of this center-left party. Assuring Paroubek himself on environment and health issues is less important than providing him with a way to show others that they have nothing to fear. Finally, use flattery early and often with Paroubek - He would like to be seen as a statesman, and we should encourage that kind of high mindedness. Expect an "impromptu" press conference at the end of the meeting as Paroubek uses your meeting to portray himself as an insider who is a major player even while out of government.

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Monday 23 April -  
Presentation to Senior MOD and MFA representatives.  
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¶10. (C/NF) These civilian and military leaders are your troops on the ground, implementing the Czech Republic's effort to make missile defense a reality here. Many have been working on missile defense for close to a year. You should brief them in as much detail as possible on 1) environmental and health issues, 2) the degree to which this radar initiative could associate itself with NATO and 3) how this system guarantees protection for Czech Republic. These individuals have to respond to skeptics, some from within their own organizations, and also to local leaders who often base their opposition to the radar on disinformation. I suggest you leave plenty of time for their questions, and that you mention the timeline for your sending a technical expert to help them in their work.

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Monday 23 April -  
Presentation to Parliament

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¶11. (C/NF) The five parliamentary parties have the following approaches to missile defense.

Civic Democrats (ODS) center-right, 81 seats in Parliament  
Leaders of the governing coalition. Strongly for hosting a radar in the Czech Republic.

Christian Democrats (KDU-CSL) 13 seats in Parliament  
Junior partner in the governing coalition. Generally for the radar initiative.

Greens (Zelena Strana) 6 seats in Parliament  
Junior partner in the governing coalition. Generally against the radar, with a few pragmatists. The leadership says it would vote for the system if it were to become part of the architecture of a future NATO system.

Social Democrats (CSSD) 74 seats in Parliament  
Officially for a referendum on the issue (an extremely unlikely eventuality). Much of the party remains favorably inclined towards the United States. Under the right circumstances several members could be persuaded to vote in favor of the radar facility. However, CSSD insiders share that they officially oppose MD because the Czech Government supports it, i.e. they feel that they have to behave as opposition party on all major issues. This might change if better information sharing makes the electorate less likely to reward the party which opposes the radar.

Communists (KSCM) 26 seats in Parliament

Completely against anything to do with the United States.  
Also disproportionately represented in local politics around  
the candidate site.

¶12. (C/NF) Your presentation to a joint session of the three  
committees on Defense and Foreign Affairs follows hard on the  
heels of Russian DFM Kislyak's April 12 briefing to the Czech  
Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee. In that briefing he  
claims to have demonstrated that the radar site is a step in  
a larger U.S. strategy to develop a global missile defense  
that will change the balance of power between the United  
States and Russia. Kislyak claimed that:

I) There is no threat; II) If there were truly a threat from  
the Middle East, the radar would be placed further to the  
south; III) A U.S. missile defense radar in the Czech  
Republic is aimed at watching Russia, and would be a greater  
short and medium term threat to Russia than the planned  
interceptors in Poland.

¶13. (C/NF) Your presentation must prove Kislyak wrong on all  
of these points, and must do so in enough detail to prove to  
the parliamentarians that it is the United States that is  
telling the truth, not Russia. Your presentation must also  
include the elements mentioned above of 1) environmental and  
health issues, 2) the degree to which this radar initiative  
could associate itself with NATO 3) how this system  
guarantees protection for Czech Republic and 4) the system  
will not increase the risk of terrorist attack.

¶14. (C/NF) This is one meeting where you should not be afraid  
of speaking for a long time, and in great depth. This will be  
a closed session (although press may be invited to take a  
photo at the start). You can make this group feel like  
insiders by dispelling some of the myths that have been  
spread by missile defense opponents. Charts, photos, video,  
and above all simulations will have their impact. Material to  
leave behind would be helpful. The Embassy can assist with  
duplication. For this meeting you need not leave too long a  
period for questions. Certain members of the Parliament have  
a habit of using question time to rant against the United  
States for several minutes at a time. We have allies in the  
Parliament that will be quick with questions, but you can  
expect a few from opponents. If the past is any indicator  
they may prove easy to answer, because they are based on  
mistaken presumptions about missile defense or U.S. intent.

¶15. (C/NF) Present at this meeting will be the eight Deputies  
and Senators who will have just returned from their visit to  
Kwajalein and Honolulu (Two of those MPs, and one other  
Defense Committee member, also met with you in Brussels).

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Monday 23 April -  
Press Conference  
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¶16. (C/NF) Following your presentation to Parliament, you  
will engage the Czech and some international media in a  
larger press conference. You are the only speaker; expect  
15-20 journalists. They are expected to ask about Russia, US  
benefits to the Czech Republic, US support for missile  
defense and for further clarification of the threat. With  
AFP, Reuters and AP in this group, you may be asked the  
reaction of other EU members. As you are aware, a joint  
op-ed by Secretaries Rice and Gates will be carried in the  
leading Czech daily April 23, and that may frame many of the  
questions.

¶17. (C/NF) There are three messages we believe are critical  
for the Czech public. First, the threat is real. Second,  
missile defense enhances the security of the Czech Republic  
and Europe ) which lies unprotected from missile attack.  
Reiterate for both broadcast and print media that this system

will protect Czech territory. Third, the public needs to understand the radar is not harmful in any way ) to health or to the environment. It complies with the highest health, environmental and safety standards and you may chose to cite whatever studies you can on this point.

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Monday 23 April -  
Presentation to the National Security Council  
and meeting with Prime Minister Topolanek  
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¶18. (C/NF) The National Security Council is made up of the Prime Minister, nine ministers, three other senior officials and, upon his request, the President. We expect that President Klaus will attend. The last NSC meeting announced it was inviting you to Prague for consultations. You can expect this will be the highest profile event of your trip.

¶19. (C/NF) While protection of the Czech Republic and environmental concerns should be dealt with in your briefing, NATO is the dividing factor here. The Greens want the U.S. to promise that this will become part of a future "NATO system" and are likely to question you closely on this point. Green Party Deputy Prime Minister Martin Bursik plans to attend and will be pushing for more NATO involvement. PM Topolanek has a lot riding on the success of the missile defense initiative. He stands to gain if your visit goes well but he too will hope that you can address the NATO angle in a manner that does not further divide his coalition. This is a largely friendly audience, but don't be surprised if in the press conference afterwards the Prime Minister emphasizes the intention of the Czech government to require full information from the U.S. government during the negotiating period. He needs to project to the electorate that the Czech Government can negotiate effectively with an ally the size of the United States without being squashed.

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Monday 23 April -  
Dinner with Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg  
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¶20. (C/NF) Your meeting with FM Schwarzenberg is more a matter of form than an essential encounter. The Foreign Ministry has already warned us that Schwarzenberg will have just arrived from 10 days of travel (including a meeting with Secretary Rice in Washington) and will be extremely tired. He is a committed transatlanticist and a missile defense supporter, going far beyond the level of his more timid counterpart in the Defense Ministry, Vlasta Parkanova. It was Schwarzenberg who responded to Putin's February rant in Munich by saying that Putin had "clearly and convincingly" shown why NATO should be enlarged.

¶21. (C/NF) Schwarzenberg, though not formally aligned with the Green Party, fills the Foreign Minister post given to the Greens. Insiders in Prague say he has been tasked with delivering Green Party support for Missile Defense, a challenging task. He may return to the NATO angle, as this is the facet of missile defense the Green Party cares about most.

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¶22. (C/NF) Also present at this dinner, and at most of your meetings will be Deputy FM Tomas Pojar, whom you will meet on the margins of the NAC on April 19. Pojar is an enthusiastic MD supporter and will lead the Czech negotiating team. Tomas Klvana, a talented young man who may be named the Prime Minister's point man on MD, will attend the dinner with Schwarzenberg.

¶22. (C/NF) I wish you successful meetings at NATO. We are looking forward to your arrival in Prague and to working with you to make the radar initiative a success.  
GRABER